

# Christianity and Crisis

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DETROIT

## Fear or Faith?

THE new administration has entered upon its arduous task; and the world as well as the nation is eagerly looking for the answer in action to the question posed in these columns a month ago—*Whither Demos?* If the answer suggested there was confessedly somewhat "cryptic," few "liberals" would question for a moment the substantial accuracy of the analysis. Demos does act from fundamental attitudes rather than from carefully reasoned premises. Personalities count enormously. There is always a pendulum swing in social movements; and in this case after twenty years of democratic control the rejection motive was obvious.

But when one realizes how definitely the landslide victory was that of the war-hero and not of the party which had nominated him, is it going too far afield to suggest that another motive, emerging from the subconscious, hardly recognized by those who acted upon it, played its part and challenges action? In the past seven years since the end of the fighting, America has been living under the shadow of a great fear; the fear of the Soviet Union as an aggressive foe in the world of national interests and the fear of Russian Communism as the inspiration of groups within our own land banded together to take over the government when the time is ripe.

We are not afraid in our rational moments. The President's Inaugural address was right about that. We do not believe that Russia can conquer the world. We do not believe that the Communist conspirators, the pitiful little groups we are bringing to trial can really take over the government. But with the Pentagon telling us daily of our military weakness; with the press continually informing us of our failures abroad; with the Korean war apparently an insoluble problem; with the China lobby cheerfully at work undermining all faith in our own leaders; with the McCarthies and McCarrans and Tenneys backed by the American Legion and other "patriots" shouting that our only salvation is in adopting the methods of our totalitarian enemies, what wonder is it that hidden in the depths of our subconscious there lies, as I have said, a great fear? We would not confess it. We would call it caution, necessary safeguarding in a dangerous world. But to our free-nation allies it looks, to quote Herbert Agar, "as if we must be

scared or hysterical" (which mean the same thing). Who then is to save us but the General who led our forces to victory in Europe, and who has in a measure succeeded in getting NATO to work?

Now the great fear can be driven out only by the great faith. Men who believe in God do not fear death. Men who believe in the deep underlying meanings of what we call more or less appropriately the "American way of life" do not fear contact with those who hold to other "ways of life." That would seem to be quite obvious. Why, for example, should a scientist who is thoroughly convinced that freedom for research, the kind of freedom which all the great universities have until this present moment taken for granted, is essential to his profession as well as to a sound social order, hesitate to discuss problems of science with another scientist who is reported to be, or is perhaps known to be a Communist. The case of Dr. Condon illustrates the point—why should it be taken for granted as it obviously is by vast numbers of people that any association with persons of leftist tendency always means that it is the *loyal* person who is in danger? Why should any one who professes the great faith run to cover when a liberal is sighted? Is our faith in democracy so weak that we are endangered by a few sailors from a French ship spending a day ashore? A silly parson burns a copy of the new translation of the Bible. Is the faith of Christians so weak that we must go back to book burning and indexes?

This unhappy situation, which in another way Dr. Niebuhr has described so well, suggests two comments. The first is a very modest note on our foreign policy. Both the President and Mr. Dulles have stated that they wish to initiate a more positive, a more dynamic policy than that which has guided us through the years since the close of the fighting war. In many ways our policy has been both positive and dynamic, but it has failed in one very definite fashion to express the great faith which in our best moments we do sincerely hold. It has accepted the implication of the guilt by association heresy. It has it is true been ready to negotiate with Russia; and it opened the Marshall Plan to the Communist world; but it has gradually come to take for granted

the separation of the world into two "camps." It has failed to take the kind of generous view of world problems which one finds for example in Stringfellow Barr's *Citizens of the World*. It has blocked trade with Communist countries. It has acted in fear rather than in faith.

Now it is obvious that one cannot expect much from the Kremlin or from the Chinese Communists, but the point of emphasis is that in our vast military preparation and in our legislation (e.g. the McCarran-Walter Bill) we not only fail to penetrate the iron curtain; we make the division of the world into two camps more definite. The Voice of America may tell what freedom means; but it only strengthens the Soviet leaders in their isolation. To free the satellite nations is a worthy goal; but Mr. Kennan spoke the truth about it. The unlearned observer cannot but remember that although we need a sufficiency of military strength, the armed forces are not likely ever to say "enough!" The big faith in freedom needs the courage to turn, to make its purpose not defense; not victory; but the continuing effort to realize the U.N. goal of one world.

In all this there is also a warning to Christians.

That is the second comment. There must be many millions of professed Christians who have accepted the guilt by association heresy. They have forgotten their faith? Obviously no sensible Christian will want to make himself part of a Communist conspiracy. But does not his very faith say to him that in his personal relations with Communists he has an opportunity to show something of the meaning of that faith. Converting Communists is probably not a very fruitful missionary endeavor; but a Christian can at least make clear that his religion is as concerned as that of any Communist in human welfare and that for him welfare means freedom of the spirit as well as plenty of food. It is high time Christians should wake up to the fact that guilt by association is heresy in those who have committed themselves to Christ. It is their business as loyal Americans as well as loyal Christians to use their heads to help both at home and abroad in driving out the great fear by the great faith; and, one might add, that seems to mean in foreign policy not only support of the United Nations as an organization but a determination to take every possible step to make the "one world" a reality—foolish? Perhaps; but we might try it.

E. L. P.

## A First Glimpse of South Africa

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

ON this rapid round-the-world flight, I did not intend to visit South Africa. Indeed, if the whole truth be told, I did not very much want to visit South Africa. And for at least two reasons. On the one hand, while recognizing that it is never possible really to understand a situation or people without personal contact, I felt that, through *Cry, The Beloved Country* and countless first-hand accounts, one had a reasonably clear and reliable picture of South Africa which observation could only confirm. On the other hand, what could a visit to South Africa possibly lead to? What can any of us do about it? With such limited time available and the whole of the African continent inviting investigation, far better give every moment to areas where a friendly Christian initiative might hope to gain a leverage toward helpful results.

Only a ceaseless bombardment by letters and wires from friends overcame this reluctance and persuaded me, most unwillingly, to forego a respite at Victoria Falls and hop south between Rhodesia and the Congo for four days in Johannesburg.

They have been among the four most enlightening and valuable days of my life. I fully appreciate the unreliability of first and quick impressions, especially in a situation as complex and tense as this one. But I have had the advantage of the constant com-

panionship and shepherding of probably the ablest and wisest Christian leader of South Africa, of a carefully planned program of first-hand visitation, inspection and conferences, and of a very considerable number of frank and intimate conversations with persons of almost every group and shade of opinion. Certain impressions requiring radical modification of one's over all view of the problem which is South Africa are set down for whatever they may be worth.

### *The present state of the native Africans.*

I have spent many hours visiting residence-areas of every type inhabited by "non-Europeans" — the mining company compounds into which native laborers recruited up-country virtually on an indentured basis are herded for nine-month terms and then shipped back home; the unnumbered communities of one-family homes, many of them quite new, some sponsored by government, others privately owned and operated, which seem to ring Johannesburg; some of the worst of the "shanty towns" pictured in Alan Paton's book and film; the independent towns owned and operated wholly by Africans outside the municipal limits.

In any ideal community, the "company compounds" and the system of labor-employment which

creates them should not exist. Their worst feature is not the living conditions provided but the uprooting of young men from their communal existence in the rural "reserves" and their transplantation into the demoralizations and dissipations of a great metropolis. Even this is not without its parallels in the life of migrant labor in the United States. The most hopeful feature of this thoroughly bad system is not the provisions for health, recreation and education by some of the more enlightened mining companies, but the fact that here, as elsewhere throughout Africa, increasingly family migration is replacing individual indenture and the increasing provision of family dwellings to make this possible. In Northern Rhodesia, I was told that close to fifty per cent of the migration from native communities to industrial centers is now by families.

Some of the communities of one-family homes for native Africans are among the most attractive "garden villages" which I have seen anywhere in the world—well-built two or three room dwellings with plenty of open space between and acres of open ground round about, many of them with well-cultivated flower and truck gardens, adequately supplied with school and recreation facilities. By comparison, the sweltering tenements of our large cities are festering by incubators of physical and moral disease. Even the "shanty towns" struck me as far less unhealthy and undesirable living places than the tumble-down Negro shacks on the outskirts of almost any city in the deep South.

By all odds, the most disturbing type of residence situation is the independent communities outside the metropolitan boundaries which are entirely owned, operated, governed and policed by the Africans themselves. Not primarily because of crowded and unsanitary living conditions, but because of the absence of minimal structures of law and order. These must be the principal breeding grounds of lawlessness and immorality.

Scattered through the native residence areas are schools, playgrounds, and community centers, very largely church-sponsored, which, while far less plentiful and well-equipped than the ideal, are less inadequate than corresponding facilities in many American cities. Even this present government with its futile cry of *apartheid* and vicious doctrine of race superiority is doing vastly more for its native population by way of health, educational and recreational facilities than I would have supposed; vastly more, be it confessed, than all too many American communities with congested Negro districts.

What of the persons who inhabit these varied communities? I can only report that they give every appearance of being markedly healthier, happier and better contented than their brothers of black skin, in any corresponding Negro community with which I am familiar, north or south, in the United States.

Nor are these comparisons applicable only to

South Africa. For the past two weeks, I have been travelling steadily through East, Central and South Africa—Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika, the Rhodesias, as well as the Union. I have seen tens of thousands of Africans, on country roads and city streets, on farms and in shops; and I have talked with some scores of them. I have yet to see a body as ill-nourished or a face as tense and discontented as meet me by the dozens daily in New York subways and streets. I have yet to pass through an African residence area which has stirred within me that vague apprehension and mood of hopelessness which overwhelm me every time I stray two hundred yards from my own home into Harlem.

This is not for one moment to say that the situation is idyllic or anything like what it should and could be. It is to say two other things. On the one hand, that basic *human* conditions are, as of today, less depressing and less alarming than parallels at home; in consequence, the problem, vast and intractable as it appears, is not *intrinsically* insoluble. On the other hand, it is to focus attention on the real heart of that problem — the attitudes and policies of the white population. The future hangs on that. Whether today's possibilities deteriorate into hopeless conflict and chaos depends wholly on the "Europeans."

#### *The present political situation.*

In the States, we hear almost altogether of Dr. Malan and his Nationalist advocates of *apartheid*. Their grip upon South Africa today is far less secure than often supposed; their dominance over South Africa tomorrow is almost certainly doomed.

No one will venture a confident prediction of the outcome of the forthcoming general election, scheduled for April. Many believe the Nationalists will be crowded out by the Union Party (moderates) by a small margin. One of the leaders of the latter was quoted to me as saying he hoped his party would *not* come to power; their margin of control might be too slim to permit effective reversal of present policies.

The severest and most unqualified indictments of the Nationalists and *apartheid* are not being framed in Europe or America but in South Africa. Johannesburg is a center of British rather than Afrikaans influence. I have been reading every word of its two excellent daily papers. Their condemnation of Malan and all his works make Pittsburg's hatred of Truman and the New-Fair Deal seem, by comparison, mild approbation.

In any event, two facts about the future appear beyond challenge. *First*, the extremists *within* the Nationalist Party are gaining control of it. Whether they win or lose the next election, Malan will shortly retire and be replaced by a far more violent and irrational leader. Therefore, a Nationalist victory portends worse days for South Africa and the world



in the immediate future. But, *second*, in the long run and probably not too long, the Nationalist extremism is doomed. Not only is the determined opposition of more moderate counsels and policies strong and steadily gaining strength. Extreme Nationalism is pitting itself against inexorable forces in the very nature of the situation which can be temporarily retarded but which cannot ultimately be halted. These forces are economic as well as political and humanitarian. Economic power lies largely with the non-Afrikaan elements of the population, indissolubly linked by tradition and by self-interest with foreign capital and overseas trade. Through these channels, the judgment and conscience of the world may make its influence most effectively felt within South Africa. The extremists, in the familiar Dutch figure, are desperate men, sticking their fingers into the ever more numerous and ever enlarging holes in the dyke. Many believe that, at least subconsciously, they sense this inevitability of history. The "wave of the future" bears the cause not of Nationalism but of moderation.

Indeed, in the longer view, the most ominous current development on the African continent may be, not the temporary triumph of reaction in South Africa, but the pending Federation in Central Africa, which may impose on Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika the scheme of white supremacy dominant in Southern Rhodesia, which is itself a projection of South African attitudes and policies northward.

Even the Afrikaaners leadership is by no means without its elements of light and vision. Certainly the most exciting and possibly the most promising conference I have had was with the Commission on the Socio-Economic Development of the Native Areas within the Union of South Africa. The Commission was appointed by the present Government. Its nine members are all, or almost all, Afrikaaners. But they are scholars of competence and wide knowledge, several of whom have studied at first hand the race problem in the United States and elsewhere. They are engaged in a three year inquiry, and expect to present their findings and recommendations by the end of 1953. Their assignment is to develop a comprehensive, long-range and inclusive policy for the "reserved areas," the vast and potentially rich tracts of land mostly along the east coast which are reserved exclusively for native residence and use where five-eighths of the native Africans still live.

I have seldom met a more competent or enlightened group of highly trained and informed social scientists. They have taken as the base-line, determinative of all their recommendations, "the human factor," that is the welfare of the peoples concerned. And their guiding principle is that all proposals must hold in view and be devised to further the *total* advance of the population, not merely economic progress but economic, educational, social, cultural and spiritual factors in their organic unity (perhaps

an echo of General Smuts' "Holism"?). The fact that the focus of their attention is upon the "native areas" and presupposes the continuing residence of a majority of the Africans within these "reserved" territories opens their proposals to the suspicion of being "enlightened apartheidism." This they fully recognize and emphatically disavow. Their work-rooms are crowded with maps, charts and data on every aspect of the African people, their potentialities and their problems. For example, they have detailed evidence of the well nigh limitless economic potential of the "reserved areas." And they have great and soundly conceived plans for their progressive transformation from recommendations they will sponsor. And we know only too well the long step between formulation by experts and implementation by politicians. Nevertheless, this Commission is a heartening evidence that *some* Afrikaaners are seeking to conceive a worthy future for the Africans, and may hold promise that, once the curse of white superiority dogma is surrendered, the best elements of "Dutch" and "British" ancestry might join hands in constructive measures. In any event, their forthcoming report is worth watching for.

#### *The role of the Churches.*

The uniqueness of the South African problem lies in two facts. On the one hand, the complicated and tragic racial situation with which we are well familiar. On the other hand, the less widely recognized influence of the Churches. While there are some Catholics and not a few Jews (the present mayor of Johannesburg is an able and delightful orthodox Jew), the religion of South Africa is predominantly Protestant, largely Dutch Reformed. It might be held that South Africa is the most nearly "Protestant Country" on earth. As is well known, Dutch Reformed theologians have developed a Scriptural justification, based largely on isolated Old Testament passages and a tortured perversion of the great Pauline vision of the transcendence in Christ of all racial discriminations, for the separation of the races and even for white superiority. This has furnished religious sanction for the worst features of Afrikaans' nationalism and apartheid.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft, in his brilliant and informative "Report of a Visit to South Africa" has advanced the thesis that the fulcrum of South Africa's future lies within the Dutch Reformed Churches. And there were those at the recent Lucknow meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches who would have used this consideration to silence any forthright declaration on racial discrimination which might offend the Afrikaaners. Only yesterday, the able Director of the South African Institute of Race Relations, Mr. Quinton White, declared to the Institute meeting, "I believe the Dutch Reformed Church is the key to the situation in South Africa."

Far be it for a casual visitor after a few days' observation to challenge such authority. But I cannot stifle doubts. Of course, the key to the problem is in the hands of the Dutch Reformed Churches in somewhat the same sense that the key to the race problem in the American South has always been in the hands of the white southern Protestant Churches, if they could bring themselves to use their power. Our recent history shows all too tragically that, in fact, the southern churches as such have *not* been a decisive factor for radical and adequate racial advance. Nothing I have seen in these few days here has encouraged the hope that the South African Dutch Reformed Churches will rise to their Christian opportunity and duty.

There are two other great Protestant forces in South Africa. One is the so-called "free churches"—Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Congregationalist, etc., most of them with very sizable African as well as "European" memberships. Within their leaderships are many men of crystal-clear insight and forthright courage; for example, the great Methodist Church of South Africa with over 1,000,000 Africans and 130,000 "Europeans," mostly of British stock. Second is the group of native African Churches, in addition to the large African numbers within the Free Churches. Among these two groups are most of those who see the present tragedy of South Africa in a truly Christian perspective and who have constructive proposals for its resolution. Moreover, they look out into an uncertain and painful future, not with despair but with hope born of a sound appraisal of the historic realities and sustained by Christian faith. I suspect that it is a counsel, not only of Christian brotherhood but also of shrewd statesmanship, to fasten our attention and our hopes upon them. Certainly nothing would more strengthen their hands than the understanding sympathy and support of fellow-Christians elsewhere in their struggle for a truly Christian South Africa.

## A Man and His Idea

JUSTIN WROE NIXON

**T**HERE are times when those who work with a leader in any worthy field of activity become unusually aware of what they owe to him both as a person and as a symbol of the task in which he has been engaged.

Such a time has come to the friends and associates of Dr. F. Ernest Johnson who retired at the beginning of this year as Secretary of the Central Department of Research and Survey of the National Council of Churches. Because Dr. Johnson has been a member of the Editorial Board of *Christianity and Crisis* from its beginning, and because it has been his peculiar vocational responsibility to deal with "crises" in public affairs, it seems appropriate to put

down here some reflections on the significance of his work. There is promise for the future in his work. If the churches can see what that promise is, it may help them to determine priorities in the development of their policies and programs in these fateful days.

Ernest Johnson's work can be seen in adequate perspective only against the background of the report of the Interchurch World Movement on the steel strike of 1919-20, issued more than thirty years ago. The strike began in September 1919. The investigation of the steel strike by churchmen was authorized at a conference called by Interchurch leaders in New York the following month. The strike failed, and it came to an end in January 1920, but the committee of churchmen under the leadership of Bishop McConnell continued their investigation and released their report in June 1920. Shortly thereafter the Interchurch World Movement collapsed.

Those who had been interested in this effort of churchmen to get at the facts in a situation of industrial conflict wondered what to do next. Someone recalled that at the conference when the investigation of the steel strike was authorized, the Interchurch leaders had distributed to each person present a little book entitled "The New Spirit in Industry" written by F. Ernest Johnson, a young minister who had made a study of the strike in the textile mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts. The Interchurch Movement was gone, but Mr. Johnson remained. He had become the Secretary of the newly established Research Department of the Social Service Commission of the Federal Council of Churches. Why not encourage the development of research into industrial and other social conditions through the Federal Council and Mr. Johnson? The suggestion took hold. The leaders of the Federal Council were favorable. Ernest Johnson, accordingly, entered upon what was to be the main part of his life work.

From 1920 on, the Research Department of the Social Service Commission (which became in 1924 an independent department of the Federal Council) pursued the task of making special studies of critical social situations. In the earlier work of the Department, studies of situations characterized by economic tension predominated. As the years passed other types of problems also came into the picture.

The most controversial of the studies made by Dr. Johnson and his Department was that on "The Prohibition Situation," issued in 1925. It was published in full in the *Herald Tribune* and it made front page news for a week in the *New York Times*. It was the subject of more than five hundred editorials in the nation's press. It was a sensation because it took a far more objective view of the workings of Prohibition than people were accustomed to find in church circles.

The most immediately influential of these studies was that on "The Twelve Hour Day in the Steel

Industry" (1923). We have already called the attention to the Interchurch steel strike report of 1920. The situation went on simmering. President Harding appealed to the steel owners to do something about the long day widely prevalent in the industry. The Research Department of the Federal Council went to work on the problem. On May 25, 1923 the Iron and Steel Industries issued a statement based on the findings of its experts to the effect that it was impracticable to abolish the twelve hour day, and that the long day "has not of itself been an injury to the employees, physically, mentally or morally." The sequence of the events that followed is significant.

On June 6th an interfaith statement representing the Federal Council, the National Catholic Welfare Council and the Central Conference of American Rabbis set forth a devastating reply to the decision of the Iron and Steel Institute. On June 30th the Research Department of the Federal Council released its study on "The Twelve Hour Day in the Steel Industry" which provided factual data in support of the interfaith statement. Then the experience of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co., demonstrating the practicality of a shorter working day became available. Finally on August 2nd the Iron and Steel Institute under the leadership of Judge Gary of U. S. Steel, reversed itself and announced plans to abolish the twelve hour day.

Commenting on these events, almost a quarter of a century later, the magazine *Fortune* said of the Federal Council's contribution: "Its famous 1923 report on conditions in the steel industry undoubtedly helped persuade U. S. Steel's pious Bible-quoting Elbert H. Gary to renounce the twelve hour day." Dr. Johnson himself wrote long afterwards of these events: "Here was a coincidence of prophetic announcement, factual documentation and conclusive demonstration." He added regretfully, "No one can say what might have been accomplished in social betterment if the churches had made more than the meagerest provision for research and study looking toward this kind of action."

It was not the intention of Dr. Johnson in making this statement to cast any discredit upon the Federal Council. The Council itself was always heavily dependent upon the gifts of individuals and never achieved adequate support from the churches. But the nature of the support the Research Department did receive affected both the direction of its work and the way in which the results of that work reached the public.

During the decade of the twenties the industrial studies of the Department were made possible by socially-minded Christians who were interested particularly in the problems of labor. With the coming of the depression it became more difficult to secure funds that had been previously available for these studies. At the same time the government, under the Roosevelt administration, seemed to be enacting into

law a number of the reforms affecting industry which churchmen had been advocating. Meanwhile growing consideration for the problems of rural life had brought added personnel to the Department. And from 1931 on Dr. Johnson himself began to give more time to the field of education.

As a result of these developments, while the original motivating concern for the problems of industry continued, the interests of the Department as a whole were broadened. And, for reasons of economy, more of the special study material was published in *Information Service* which had been from the beginning the weekly organ of the Department. Friends of Dr. Johnson have compiled a bibliography of his writings containing more than two hundred signed articles plus almost a score of books of which he is author, co-author, or editor. But much of his writing is in the unsigned material of *Information Service*.

What was the idea that found expression in the aspects of Ernest Johnson's career, of which we have been thinking? It was the idea of research as an essential element in an ethical approach to social disorder. Ernest Johnson has lived during a period when Christians have become increasingly aware of situations in our complex society where their principles were being violated. Because the tension between problem and solution is difficult to bear many Christians have been prone to leap at solutions. Ernest Johnson has urged that we "investigate before we pronounce." He has pleaded for deliberation. He has then sought to make that deliberation fruitful by attacking a social problem as it has appeared in a concrete situation; by gathering data on the situation as objectively as possible; by analyzing its issues in the light of Christian values; by re-checking data and analyses with the various parties in controversy; and by seeking verification of proposed remedies when available. This was the substance of what he conceived research, as an ingredient of practical Christian ethics, to be.

The by-products of the employment of research methods on controversial issues he has esteemed as important as the contribution they make to possible solutions. Research in his view encourages the attitude of mental flexibility toward issues in controversy as against the attitude of those who feel they have the answers already. It develops contacts between those who deal with theory and those who live with our social troubles in their concrete form. It makes possible interfaith cooperation and the determination in practise of where such cooperation is feasible and where it is not. Perhaps most important of all, it helps to neutralize the effects of the view that the churches, because of their traditional beliefs and pre-judgments, cannot be expected to make serious contributions to the solution of social problems.

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# After-Thoughts on the Advisory Commission of the World Council of Churches

FRANCIS P. MILLER

THERE are two comments I would like to make on the work of the Advisory Commission of the World Council of Churches. We have now held two meetings; one lasting ten days in July, 1951, and one lasting a week in September, 1952. Consequently, we have already had enough experience to justify some preliminary general conclusions.

One of my comments has to do with the commission's method of work.

The method of work which is being slowly developed by this commission is of such value that it deserves the most careful study by church leaders throughout the Protestant world. It is a method peculiarly well suited to deal with the central tenets of our faith, and it is at the same time a very simple method.

The method consists in bringing together twenty or twenty-five persons who are competent to discuss the matter under consideration and who agree to remain together for a week or ten days. Every effort is made to include the widest variety of experience and background and to insure that all the great emphases in Protestant thinking on the subject before the group will find effective expression. The discussion is carried forward in plenary sessions of the group as a whole, in sub-committee meetings and in informal conversations. In this way there is the maximum exchange of opinion and the maximum opportunity to establish common ground and eliminate misunderstandings. The one real weakness of our 1952 meeting was that there was never sufficient time in the plenary sessions to examine the statements prepared by the sub-committees as thoroughly as they deserved.

No doubt every member of the Advisory Commission could make suggestions for the improvement of the commission's procedure. But the main outlines of the method employed are absolutely sound and have been more than justified by our experience to date. These include the size of the group, the variety of points of view among its members, the length of the meeting and the procedures for conducting the discussion and arriving at an agreed conclusion.

The best psychiatrists tell us that mass neurosis can only be cured by group therapy. I profoundly believe that those of us who have been working together in the Advisory Commission have experienced the value of group therapy. It is a method which should be adopted and used whenever churches are trying to re-state the essence of their faith or to make advances in inter-denominational cooperation.

My second comment has to do with the theological orientation of our commission. I make this comment with great diffidence because I am well aware that some of the best theologians in the Protestant world are members of the commission, and it ill becomes a layman to raise theological questions in such company unless he can no longer remain silent. But the more I have thought about the first two meetings of our commission the more concerned I have become that we have allowed our discussion of Christian Hope to be confined within the frame-work of the provisional theme assigned to the commission by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. That theme was "Jesus Christ our Lord, the only Hope of the Church and the World." At this year's meeting the Advisory Commission recommended to the Central Committee that the theme be "Christ, the Hope of the World."

My concern is that by focusing the attention of the whole Protestant world upon the idea that Christ is our only hope we may unintentionally restrict and even warp to some extent the Christian message for our time. Is it not as true to say: "Our Hope is the Holy Spirit" as it is to say: "Our Hope is Christ"? Is not our Hope in God—Father, son and Holy Spirit? And can we state the Christian Hope without stating it in perfectly clear Trinitarian terms? If we do not state it in precise Trinitarian terms there is a real danger that we may confuse Christian people and fail to give as true a witness as the times demand.

St. Paul put the matter briefly and simply in his letter to the *Romans* (XV, 13): "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit." And Jesus Himself told His disciples that His going was for their good because if He did not depart the Spirit would not come. However, He added, when the Spirit does come He will lead you into all truth and He will disclose to you what is to come.

It would appear, therefore, that any discussion of Hope should be as much concerned with the work of the Spirit as with the fact of Christ.

I sincerely trust that the members of the commission will give this matter due consideration when they meet in the summer of 1953.

In conclusion, I should like to say how much those of us who met in September, 1952 missed several members of the 1951 group who were absent including Henry P. Van Dusen, Emil Brunner and particularly our beloved Reinhold Niebuhr.

# Christianity and Crisis

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May we venture to add to the above, which is based on Ernest Johnson's thinking, that it is the absence of down-to-earth research by the churches into ethical issues that is responsible in part for Mr. Charles P. Taft's complaint as to the impracticality of the advice which the layman receives from the churches on the problems he has to face. It is also responsible in part for the phenomenon of the "tired liberal" in the churches who urges pronouncements on Christian ideals and solutions but who has little realization of the tortuous paths by which men move toward improvement of the human lot.

It is always difficult to say how much a man owes to an idea that guides him and how much the idea owes to the man. In the case of Ernest Johnson one is sure that his idea lost nothing in persuasiveness by being embodied in his personality. Paul Tillich has called attention to the enriching influence on the individual of living on the boundary between great human interests. There is where Ernest Johnson has lived. Throughout his career he has been deeply interested in education. From 1931 to 1950 he divided his time between the Federal Council and his work as Professor of Education in Teachers College, Columbia University. He has been Chair-

man of the Committee on Religion and Education of the American Council on Education, and a Director of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion. He has edited five volumes for the Institute of Religious and Social Studies. He has had many other interests. Here we would point out only that more than most men he has lived on the boundary line between education and religion, between theory and practice, between books and people, between the generalizations to which professors are prone and the concrete situations where human factors tend to break generalizations to pieces. All of these experiences have contributed to his development as a man living on the spiritual frontier of his time, a creative influence in the lives of those who know him through either his writings or his conversation.

What he has done has required an unusual combination of qualities. That, I believe, was what the late Arthur Holt had in mind when he paid a spontaneous tribute to the subject of this article. I shall always remember it. As we were coming out of a conference where Ernest had contributed with his usual balance and wisdom, Arthur said "Ernest Johnson is God's gift to our American churches."

What is the promise in Ernest Johnson's work for the churches? It lies in his idea. Will the churches really take hold of this idea and foster research into the difficult and controversial issues of our society? If they will they can find plenty of issues to work on.

There is for instance, the cluster of issues invoked by the word "segregation." It seems as impracticable now to get rid of segregation in many phases of our common life as it seemed three decades ago to get rid of the twelve hour day in the steel industry. Just to mention Catholic-Protestant relations starts tremors along the spine. It is much easier simply to let Paul Blanshard and James O'Neill argue the case across denominational back-fences. . . . These are only a few of the issues by which churchmen today are confused. They need clarification by Christian leaders using the best instruments of study our intelligence can devise.

Here we would say only that if the churches take up seriously the task of providing adequate ethical guidance for Christians in our society, they will find that they will be following, at least in part, the trail of research that Ernest Johnson has been blazing for now more than thirty years.

## Authors In This Issue

Dr. Van Dusen's report on South Africa is a fruit of his visit there in the course of a ten week tour of Asia and Africa during which he attended the central Committee of the World Council of Churches in India.

Justin Wroe Nixon is Professor of Theology and Ethics at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School.

Col. Francis P. Miller is a member of the Advisory Commission of the World Council of Churches.

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